

Proposed Upcoming PvE Map Changes



Introduction to Proposed Changes

Responsible members of the Skylords Reborn team recently met to discuss possible changes to campaign maps. What is outlined here are the proposed changes to each map. **These changes are not final and are only proposed**, please provide us feedback on what you think about the changes, what you like or dislike, and what you would modify in the proposals. Our goal is to keep the feel of each map the same while removing exploits, giving purpose to unused sections of maps, and remedying problem areas where players feel forced to “break” the map in order to play it enjoyably.

Some changes here are firmer than others, all italicized proposals have accompanying explanations for why we are considering them, but they are the most tentative of all the proposals.



Ascension:

1. Change Goal Setup on Map 3 to allow 1 player to be considered to have won the map when all objectives are completed. Right now, Map 3 requires 2 players to be completable.
2. Fix the power device on Map 2 to work on Expert like it does on Standard and Advanced. Improve clarity of when the device can be successfully activated.
3. Map 1 devices should not be able to be activated by flying units but require a ground unit nearby. This is specifically related to the portal devices.
4. Fix "the giant king shall fall" issue (where the voice line is repeated over and over) on map 2 after killing sufficient numbers of Avengers.
5. *Change initial wave of Energy Parasites to Mana Wings on Map 1.*

While using Blaster Cannons is a possible strategy on Ascension Map 1 for defending, nearly everyone uses Mark of the Keeper combined with Mana Wings to defend both their base as well as Jorne. By reducing the initial onslaught, the hope is to open Map 1 up to more strategies and be less brutal on newer players who might not own these cards.

Blight:

1. More clarity for what each spell device does.

Convoy:

1. Prevent Walkers from being trapped outside the map.
2. *Change the number of Bandit Walkers from 3 to 5 on expert difficulty.*



Convoy 1: Walkers will no longer be able to be blocked outside the map

With these changes, we would be removing the blocking strategy from Convoy, and as such, players will now need to clear the Power Shrine by the 11-minute mark or lose the map. By increasing the Bandit Walkers to 5 we increase the time limit to ~17 minutes.

Crusade:

1. When both paths are cleared before the timer is over, cause the final wave to spawn.
2. Prevent fire units from becoming stuck when blocked.
3. *Move wells in center section down and add a teleport station that teleports the player into a secret central area with secret reward.*

The central area of Crusade currently contains two wells and a gold chest, but otherwise is disconnected from the rest of the map. Because of this, it is generally ignored by the player base as going there only slows you down. It is hard to imagine how this section could be properly integrated into the rest of the map without simply adding an additional camp here, and we don't want to do that, so we have instead considered a different idea. The idea would be that in the location of the two wells there would instead be a teleport station which teleports the player to the location in the second screenshot. In this location there would be a hidden boss which, if defeated, would reward the player with a one-time reward that would only be earnable by defeating the boss. While this would not create a recurring reason to visit the center area, it would give that part of the map a reason for existing.



Crusade 1: Current center area.



Crusade 2: Secret Boss Arena

Defending Hope:

1. Add 2 more Gold Chests in the corners.
2. 1st map timer (10 min): Decrease the remaining time of the current phase (10-25% reduction) after Rogan is rescued and successfully reaches the Soulstone. This would allow speedrunners to achieve different times on the map.

Empire:

1. Fix the bug where sometimes Jorne gets stuck by Stonekin units and cannot get into his final position to start the ritual.
2. Standardize Mo's stampede abilities between difficulties.
3. Teleport device gives control based on proximity.
4. Teleport device can teleport Red King both ways instead of only to your side.
5. If Jorne (or any of the four kings) dies, players lose the map.
6. *Come up with some way for the side quests with Kobold Engineers and Midwinter to be relevant.*

In theory, the player in the past is meant to progress through the map and by doing so help the player in the present. In practice, the Kobold Engineers' buildings and the Midwinter are both rarely if ever useful. As such we would like to theory craft how we could modify Empire to allow the map to function the way it was supposed to from the beginning.

Encounters with Twilight:

1. Reduce initial cooldown of Amii Screaming Stone to 60 seconds. This will allow well-prepared players to activate the incoming Twilight attack sooner.

King of the Giants:

1. Add a timer when Rogan arrives, indicating that destroying all the walls will speed up his arrival.
2. *Fix the broken artifacts and make them more worthwhile to use.*
3. *Make it worth it to free the Midwinter, such as potentially moving the Amii Screaming Stone to the top left camp before the Amii gates, so the Midwinter isn't perpetually behind both Rogan and Jorne. We could also make the Midwinter substantially more powerful.*

Right now, many of the “powerful artifacts” scattered about the map meant to assist the player in guiding Rogan safely to the Rage Gate Tunnel do not work and others, like the teleport artifact, hinder the player by teleporting Rogan backwards. The idea would be to improve the current artifacts by potentially changing their effects while making interacting with them worthwhile to the player.

Additionally, there is a Screaming Stone to call the Midwinter in the top left part of the map whose only purpose is to give the player more PvE experience. We would like to consider ways to make the Midwinter more worthwhile to take the effort to summon.



King of the Giants 1: Screaming Stone north of the Amii gates.

Nightmare Shard:

1. Potentially decrease difficulty of waves on lower difficulties given how many new players struggle even with standard difficulty on this map.
2. Increase clarity that player gains power while having units near the Shard of the Forge.
3. *Increase starter well capacity 600 -> 900.*
4. *Increase starting void energy by ~100 to allow more options to approach the map.*

Nightmare Shard is one of the hardest maps in the game, especially on expert difficulty. It can also be fairly long with a slow start. To alleviate both issues, we are considering increasing starting well capacity, which would increase their lifetime from 20 to 30 minutes. Also, our proposed increase to starting void power will mean less waiting around and more playing the game.

Nightmare's End:

1. Make it clear the Shard of the Forge does not grant power.
2. *Asymmetric top left can build orb without destroying Power Shrine. Change top right to allow the player to build the orb without destroying the Power Shrine as well.*
3. *Increase capacity of starter wells 900 -> 1200 or increase starting void ~100-200.*



Nightmare's End 1: Top left of the map, orb can be built without destroying Shrine



Nightmare's End 2: Top right of the map, Shrine must be destroyed to build orb
Same reasoning as Nightmare's Shard. This is a very long and hard map which can also have a lot of wait time at the beginning. This would increase well lifetime from 30 minutes to 40 minutes and substantially speed up the beginning.

Ocean:

1. Map has 6 Gold Chests, remove 2 (where mines are + top middle) to standardize at 4 for all 1p maps.
2. Add remaining Dropship counter to in-game goals.
3. *Clear voodoo shack island to get a reward such as more Dropships that spawn from the island or when Dropships are lost.*
4. *Add something to top middle island to make it worth visiting such as a unit.*



Ocean 1: Voodoo Shack Island. Often skipped



Ocean 2: Top Middle Island, with the chest removed it now serves little purpose

Both islands are often skipped or ignored. We would like to give each island a reason for existing. New players often run out of Dropships, so we want to consider adding more Dropship spawns if the player puts in the effort to clear the island. Same could be done for the top middle island.

Oracle:

1. If the ritual is successful, the player gets control over some fire units. If failed, they stay neutral. This way succeeding on the ritual means something.

Passage to Darkness:

1. Change Wrath of Akylos to make it always call the wrath of the souls and make it clearer which map is currently being affected.
2. *Add a boss to the top right camp as an achievement boss to give the top right camp purpose.*

Passage to Darkness is a popular map that suffers from having sections which are superfluous. The greatest offender is the top right camp which is fully designed but which the player never has to enter. It is usually cleared by bored members of one map who are waiting for the other maps to finish. Like with Crusade, we would like to put in an achievement/one-time reward boss in this camp to give it some purpose. We have also considered making this boss required to finish the map.

Siege of Hope:

1. Spawn the Endboss when every remaining enemy on the map is cleared, even if time is remaining. Will allow speedrunners to achieve different times.
 - a. Check and adjust other spawn interactions to work alongside it, without changing the map's difficulty.

Slavemaster:

1. Owner of Mo and slaves is determined by proximity.
2. *Mo automove if player disconnects.*

If one player disconnects and the other player is not around, Mo will often just stand still with nothing to do which can lead to his death. The goal would be, if it proves possible, to have Mo automatically walk to the teleporter without the other player having to run a unit near him to take him over.

Sunbridge:

1. *Make changes to the Switching Mechanic to not allow it to be swapped every 30 seconds and thus avoid any incoming waves.*
2. *In the first major attack wave, change the Twilight Dragon to an Abomination.*
3. *Make the boss battle harder.*

If you exploit the gate switch mechanic, Sunbridge is one of the easiest expert maps in the game. If you don't, the map becomes one of the hardest maps in the game. One of the reasons so many players use the gate switch exploit is because they feel the map is unfair otherwise, and that is hardly surprising when you have to defend against a Twilight Dragon, one of the hardest standard enemies in the game, with your T2. We would like to end the exploit while simultaneously toning down the first major attack wave by replacing the Twilight Dragon with an Abomination. While still being very strong, an Abomination is a ground unit and susceptible to CC, meaning it should be substantially easier to defeat with only T2. Additionally, right now the attack waves are often more difficult than the actual boss, Mora. We would like to remedy that by increasing Mora's encounter difficulty, potentially by allowing Twilight Dragons to spawn during the fight.

The Dwarven Riddle:

1. Players should be made more aware of their own altar by including a minimap indication triangle.
2. Some of the melee/ranged Crystal Guardians can CC targets, make them visually distinctive.
3. Disable friendly fire of ranged Crystal Guardians.
4. *Add 1 orb to each side (not at T2) to give each player the ability to go T4.*

Dwarven Riddle is usually done by a single carry player while the other players support/defend. One reason for this is because the map lacks sufficient orbs for all players and some of the orbs available are difficult to reach. This additional orb would likely be included in the bottom section.

The Guns of Lyr:

1. Prevent construction of any structure at the map borders.
2. Fix the southern flames to actually deal damage.

The Insane God:

1. Give the transformed Priests some worthy active abilities such as a strong Burrower's wall spit or an area heal like Mo or self-cast Twilight Warfare. This way the player would benefit from the ability, without said ability being used by the enemy transformed priests.
2. Put a limit on the number of times Moon tells you "A Priest has fallen!"

The Soultree:

1. Add 1 gold chest to standardize all 1p maps at 4 gold chests.

The Treasure Fleet:

1. *Add a lever in the starting base to allow you to change the Treasure Wagon's route to be faster but more dangerous.*

Treasure fleet, outside of exploits, is a map with a fixed time and a rather long fixed time at that. Because of this, it is rarely played through multiple times. We would like to increase the replayability of the map for experienced players by giving them the option to speed up the Treasure Wagon while directing it through a more dangerous path. This would also give many of the northern camps, with which the player never needs to directly interact, a larger purpose in the map.



The Treasure Fleet 1: Red line is current route, blue line is proposed dangerous route

Titans:

1. Change the Ritual with the Crystals to actually affect the fight with Brannoc, this should also give the Fire Shamans more of a purpose.
2. Make Jorne use his hammer ability to destroy player buildings in his path if he is intercepted for more than X seconds.
3. Allow Jorne to die like Moon claims he can.
4. Move gold chests away from spawn areas in end fight.
5. Give position 3 a job, such as destroying tunnels to help other allies.